10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
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177 With the coming of machinery the Karens have taken
463 to mechanics. In the machine shops, foundries and work-
401 shops of the big companies, and in the oil fields they have played their part. They have also done well as motor-car mechanics and drivers as well as in electrical engineering. In mining they have done their share, although for very difficult underground tunnelling I believe they have not been found as daring as the Gurkhas of Nepal.

V

RELIGION

776 Primitive Karens are animists, worshipping the
● 782 spirits with which their imaginations people the phenomena of nature, the hills, the streams, and any unusual
[822] happenings which they see around them. The changes of season are due to conflict between the demons (often called by their Burmese name *nats*) of the dry weather and the wet. Those are victorious whose season is prevailing at the time. The banyan is supposed to be the abode of a very vigorous spirit, probably because the seeds of that tree spring up in all kinds of unsuspected places.

In addition to the spirits of the wood and mountain there are the family Penates called the *Bgha* that, when offended, cause illness by eating the *Kala* (psyche) of the person and ultimately cause his death if allowed to go on. They must be appeased by offerings of chicken or pig. Every member of the family must be present on the occasion to save one member from illness. It is hoped that the feast will be so tempting that the demon will leave the sufferer and take the food instead. The customs connected with these feasts differ in various localities and

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among different tribes. In many of the more civilized sections they are no longer carefully observed. Christians do not resort to them.

Sex irregularities are believed to be most abhorrent to the *bgha* and are reputed to have been the cause of most trouble. Among the Bwès they are considered to cause the drying up of land and the failure of crops, and are therefore most severely punished by the elders when discovered. In their primitive state the Karens were unusually free from fornication and adultery. The recent transition period, with the breaking down of old customs and before Western ideals have been established, has seen some relaxation of these conditions.

The old epic song about *Ywa*, the Father God and Creator, and this belief in the existence of God are found among all the tribes. It does not, however, play an important part in their daily lives which are taken up with their struggles with the ever-present *nats* and demons.

Those Karens who were in closest contact with the Burmans, as for example the Pwo Karens, took on a thin veneer of Buddhism and went to the pagodas at the full moon and the quarters, but as a rule it was largely a social conforming that did not have a deep spiritual content.

VI

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Karen is an agglutinated monosyllabic language belonging to the Sinic family of languages. Like the Chinese it has tones which are important in learning to speak it, for the same sound may have entirely different

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way of building, and every stage of evolution from the village-barrack to separate family houses may be observed in Karen villages to-day. (See the illustrations on pages 94, 220, and 227.)

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When an epidemic breaks out in a bamboo village-house, the inhabitants are not held there by the considerations that ordinarily prevent the dwellers in durable towns and cities from taking their prompt departure. At best the Karen village-house is habitable only for a year or two, was built by the combined efforts of the men of the little community from material of which the supply is abundant, and can be replaced quickly. When, therefore, disease begins to spread among the adjacent families, they scatter to the four winds with their most necessary belongings. Soon they gather and build another village on a new site and, having removed the last of their possessions from the old infected structure, leave it to decay or set it on fire.

361 782

When a village community is removing from one site to another, the women prepare food and liquor for the journey, pack up their belongings and leave them in the jungle near the path, if they do not wish to take them to the new place at once, and, finally, prepare the offerings to be left behind. These offerings consist of four balls of cooked rice, one white, another made black by being mixed with charcoal, and the other two colored red and yellow, respectively, by the admixture of colored pigments. These balls are placed on a large winnowing-sieve that has been woven by the women for the purpose at the very last. This tray and its offerings are carried to the central part of the house, where it is visited and spat upon by every member of the village. They then repeat the following lines:

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"Let all sickness and pain depart. Depart all colds.
Go eat your black rice, your red rice.
Go eat your betel and its leaves.
Go eat with your wife and your children.
Go stay in your house."

After thus addressing the spirits, the villagers take up their burdens, beat their drums and gongs, and set out for their new abode—a sight, indeed, for a motion picture camera.

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On arriving at the new house, they do not enter it at once, but wait until some one has plucked from adjacent trees seven twigs growing upright, and with these has swept out the rooms. As the sweeper goes through the house he repeats the following incantation:

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"Go away, all evil spirits.
Depart, all devils.
We and our children are going to stay here.
Do not remain near. Go. Go."

The members of each family then take up the various household tasks, including the building of the fireplace. If this is not completed the same night, they tie up their wrists to keep their "k'las" from wandering away and finish it the next morning. This is done among the Karen of Siam.

342 In the preceding pages of this chapter I have attempted to give a description of the Karen village-house. I do not say "home," for the Karen language has no word for home. The house is, however, something more than the eating and sleeping place of the village families: it is the center of their domestic life and worship and as such possesses a certain amount of sanctity. From what has been said above, it is clear that the village structure displays no attempts at artistic decoration, and is not made attractive by any of the touches that give so rich a meaning to the word "home" among Christians. The Karen bamboo house, located in a tropical climate as it is, affords a certain amount of physical comfort: the breezes blow through its airy walls, and one may lounge and gossip within during the heat of the day and not experience great oppression. At night, when the cool air begins to make itself felt, the open fire with its cheerful blaze attracts the story-teller, while out in the shadows the youthful lover strums his harp, and the children and the dogs play about in sufficient quietness not to disturb their elders.

231 262 Everywhere common dogs are kept by the Karen. These are the ordinary smooth-haired pariah hounds, which are familiar to the traveler in all parts of the peninsula. Besides these there are the hunting-dogs, mentioned in the chapter on Hunting and Fishing.[1] Only in recent days have the Karen shown any inclination to raise cats. In the early days they professed not to eat these felines; but I can testify that, whatever their former antipathies to the cat tribe may have been in this regard, they no longer hesitate to eat the wild varieties of cats that are to be caught in the jungle. They also find rats palatable.

Pigs and fowls are the most common domestic animals among the Karen. Dr. Mason speaks of the pigs as being of the "small Chinese variety."[2] They are the property of the women and know

[1] See p. 102.
[2] *Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal*, XXXVII, Pt. II, 129.

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Concerning their origin much that is legendary has been written. In the *Karen Thesaurus* we are told in substance that these drums ("klo oh tra oh") are very expensive and are owned in Lower Burma by a few very wealthy persons, who make offerings of food and liquor to them annually, fearing an early death if they fail to do this. The drums are said by some to have been brought from the "K' wa" country and by others from the "Swa" tribe.[2] Those who went to buy these objects paid according to the number of frogs on them, the price of one with two frogs being twenty rupees. The buyer put down the price and took away the drum, after which the owner came and got his money. If the buyer did not leave the money, he risked losing his way and being overtaken and eaten by the owner. The drums are used in making a noise like that of a gong.[3]

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Dr. Francis Mason, writing at Toungoo in 1868, speaks of these drums under the name of "kyee-zees," and is better informed than the writer in the *Thesaurus* in saying that they are obtained from the Shan. He also states that the Karen distinguish ten different kinds of drums according to sound and have a different name for each kind. Dr. Mason tells us that the best-sounding drums are worth a thousand rupees apiece, while the poorest bring only one hundred each. Dr. Mason continues: "The possession of Kyee-zees is what constitutes a rich Karen. No one is considered rich without one, whatever may be his other possessions. Everyone who has money endeavors to turn it into Kyee-zees, and a village that has many of them is the envy of the other villages and it is often the cause of wars to obtain possession of them." [4]

534 [173]

Some of the Karens have told me that in the beginning these drums were obtained from the "Yu" people, who seem to have been the Jung or Yung who occupied Yunnan in ancient times.[5] Indeed, various indications point to the probability that the drums existed or were in use in Yunnan when the ancestors of the Karen passed through there from their home in western China into Burma,

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[2] The Swa are mentioned in some of the old Karen tales and appear to have been wild cannibals, of whom but little was known. Their location seems uncertain. Some of the tales place them beyond the great waters, while others suggest that they live to the north. Probably the references are to the Waer, who are one of the head-hunting tribes still living in the northern Shan States, on the Chinese frontier.

[3] *The Karen Thesaurus*, 1847, Vol. I, pp. 227, ff.

[4] *Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1868, Vol. XXXVII, Pt. II, pp. 128, ff.

[5] Mr. Taw Sein Ko, in *Annual Archaeological Report*, Burma, 1917, pp. 22. 23. Mr. Po Lin Te writes in the *Rangoon Gazette*, Sept. 27, 1919, that the Yu were the oldest of five families who emigrated from the Sandy River and were, therefore, entitled to use the drums.

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534 [177] the Karen are less affected by outside influences, that the use of the drums has been the most prolonged.

534 531 There is considerable difference of opinion among the people of the various sections of the country about the classification of the drums. A writer in the *Rangoon Gazette* divides them into two general groups, the older and the later. He regards the older, more melodious, and more highly prized group as comprising those which have four single frogs, snails, or elephants on their heads. He subdivides this group into three divisions, namely, (1) "Klo ka paw," (2) "Klo ma ti," and (3) "Klo gaw ple." The drums in the first of these subdivisions are the oldest and best-sounding. The second general group, comprising the later and poorer drums, may be subdivided, according to this writer, into five classes, which he names as follows: (1) "Raw tear," (2) "Raw la," (3) "Raw ser," (4) "Raw saw," and (5) "Raw boo." These have four sets of double or triple frogs or elephants on their heads. Each class has its characteristic design, for example, ears of paddy supplying the decorative figure on the "Raw boo" and Karen hand-bags that on the "Raw tear."[1]

534 In the Pegu Hills the drums with the single frogs on the head and no figures down the side are known as the "hot" drums, that is, those which are beaten on occasions of death or disaster. The others, with the superimposed frogs and with elephants and snails down the side, are called "cool" drums, these being used on festive occasions. In Toungoo, however, the people do not appear to make the distinction just mentioned, but use both kinds of drums indiscriminately for festive and sad occasions, such as weddings and funerals, respectively.

534 778 782 That the drums are regarded as sacred objects can not be doubted. In the back districts, where the old customs are still perpetuated, offerings are everywhere made to them. I was informed that during the month of March, 1918, a feast was to be held in honor of certain drums in the village of Pyindaing, Tharrawaddy district, and that offerings were to be made to them, the customary period of seven years having elapsed since the last feast and offerings. I held myself in readiness to attend the celebration, but was finally told that the ceremony had been postponed indefinitely. The account in the *Karen Thesaurus* speaks of the offerings as having

[1] Mr. Po Lin Te in the *Rangoon Gazette* of Sept. 27, 1919. I regret that this writer's article appeared after I had left Burma on my furlough. I have not been able, therefore, to identify the designs mentioned by him on any picture or sketch of the few I have with me or that are accessible to me.

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been presented annually. Other sources of information indicate that they might be made at any time, especially on occasions of ca-

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KAREN BRONZE DRUM, NABAAIN VILLAGE, THABBAWAIBY DISTRICT
A drum of almost black metal, used for weddings and other festal occasions.

[534]

A "RUBBING" SHOWING THE PATTERN OF THE HEAD OF THE NABAAIN DRUM

lamity or epidemic. As far as I am able to ascertain, these offerings usually consist of food and liquor. In the early times, at least,

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to withhold such oblations from a drum was to invite the descent of illness and misfortune upon the owner.

Of the various drums which I have had an opportunity to inspect, I wish to describe two with some fullness, one of these being a "hot" drum and the other a "cool" one. The latter is shown on page 119, and was obtained in 1918 from the Nabaain village tract by Thra Shwe Thee. It is a fine specimen of its class and was used on festive occasions. Its head is twenty-one inches in diameter; its bottom or mouth, sixteen and one-half inches in diameter; its cylinder, fifteen and one-half inches long. The surface of the metal, which is black, is much worn. It has four sets of frogs on the head, each group being composed of three of the creatures, one above another. The frogs are flat and conventional in form. In the center of the head is a large twelve-pointed star, the angles close in between the rays being connected by several arcs, from the outermost of which radiating lines diverge. The points of the star are encircled by nineteen zones, which fill the space to the edge of the rim. These zones are not separated from one another by equal spaces, but fall into five groups. Counting from the center outward, the first three of these groups comprise four zones each, each group being separated from the next one by four concentric circles, while each individual zone is separated from its fellow by three circles in close proximity to one another. The fourth and fifth groups consist of three zones each, four circles separating the two groups and three circles, each zone from its neighbor. The rim zone, on which the sets of frogs stand, is broader than the others, and the edge of the rim is finished with a braided beading.

The ornamental designs contained in the several zones, group by group, are indicated in the following table:

ORNAMENTAL DESIGNS IN THE ZONES ON THE HEAD OF THE NABAAIN DRUM

Group I	*Group II*	*Group III*	*Group IV*	*Group V*
Hatching	Hatching	Hatching	Hatching	Hatching
Circles	Circles	Circles	Plaiting	Plaiting
Plaiting	Plaiting	Hatching	Birds' heads	Diamonds
Birds' heads	Six diamonds, circles, three birds	Six diamonds, circles, three birds		

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CHAPTER XX

FUNERAL CUSTOMS

When a Karen is ill, his sickness is thought to be due to some action of the malevolent spirits of the unseen world or to the wandering of his "k'la" (life principle or psyche). His malady may be due to an accident, an attack of indigestion after eating too many green mangoes, or an infection of some sort; but, according to his belief, some invisible spirit has been offended by a slight and is the real cause of his disorder.[1]

The seven-fold "k'la," which presides over the life of every person from the time of his birth, will, the Karen believes, determine the time and manner of that person's death. Notwithstanding the fact that one or another of the many causes of death will sometime effect the dissolution of every member of the race, the Karen makes offerings to delay as long as possible the inevitable end. Most propitiatory feasts require the presence of every immediate member of the family, in order to render the feasts acceptable to the spirits. If the sick person seems to be sinking, his relatives will all remain and try to be at hand when he breathes his last.

Karen funerals are by no means solemn occasions. On the contrary, they afford the greatest opportunity for the people to enjoy themselves. I have heard it said that when a considerable time has elapsed since a death in a particular region, the young people long for someone to die, so that they may have a jolly time. The question has often been raised why the Karen, who are not without family affection, conduct themselves in what to Occidentals is a very unseemly manner at the funerals of their dearly beloved ones. Possibly some light is thrown on this question by the story of the fabulous White Python. According to this story, after the python had been compelled to release "Naw Mü E," it took vengeance by killing men in great numbers by discharging its venom on their footprints. It took pleasure in hearing of the suffering and sorrow it was causing the human race and, therefore, redoubled its efforts. The peo-

[1] See Chapter XXIII, pp. 239-245, and Chapter XXIV, pp. 249-254, 257.

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CHAPTER XXII

SUPERNATURAL AND MYTHICAL BEINGS

In the Karen demonism the spirits are nearly all malevolent, and it takes a large share of the time of the people to keep on good terms with them. In the hills and remote regions these mythical beings still hold sway; but the average Karen on the plains of Lower Burma retains only a vague and dubious belief in these powers, which have lost their control over him for the most part, now that he has come into contact with many outside influences. The fullest account of these spirits is given in the *Karen Thesaurus* and the writings of Drs. Francis Mason and E. B. Cross. It is from these records, written in the early days before the Karen were disturbed by civilizing influences, that I have chiefly drawn the materials for this chapter.[1]

These numerous beings may be divided into three groups or divisions: first, those spirits that are thought to dwell apart, to possess human attributes, and to control the destiny of men and events; second, the spirits of mortals that for some reason have been condemned to wander about and that have relations, usually evil, with living men; and, third, a number of hetergeneous spirits that never were mortal, but still can influence men at various times and places. The members of this class are not so generally recognized as those of the first class.

In the first group are the "Mü xa" and the "Hti k' sa kaw k' sa," both of which are conceived of as being companies of divinities; "Naw k' plaw" or "Mü kaw li," who corresponds to Satan; "Hpi Bi Yaw," the Karen corn maiden; "Hkü Te," the ruler of hades, and "Teu Kweh," the rainbow.

The "Mü xa" seem to be a race of celestial beings, of whom "Mü xa do" (literally, the great "Mü xa") is the king. They appear to have existed prior to men, but good men may after death become members of their company and dwell with them in the upper regions of the air. They are not malicious, although offerings are

[1] Dr. J. Wade, *The Karen Thesaurus*, ed. of 1915, Vol. I, pp. 433-434; Dr. F. Mason, *Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. II, pp. 195, ff.; Rev. E. B. Cross, *Journal, Oriental Society*, Vol. IV, (1854) pp. 312, ff.

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776 782 made to them lest their anger should be aroused by some untoward act on the part of men. Their special task is to preside over births. Their king occupies himself with the creation of men, but, being interrupted continually by various demands upon his attention, he turns out many defectives, cripples, and badly colored ones. This poor workmanship led men in the past to revile the "Mü xa," who, consequently, no longer show themselves to mortals. They have the power to unite the souls of those whom they have predestined to marry. Those thus paired are vouchsafed prosperous and happy lives; but if they succeed in mating with others than those intended for them, incompatibility and adversity surely follow. The "Mü xa" are often addressed as though they were the parents of mankind and appear to hold places comparable to that of Zeus or Jupiter among the gods of the ancient Greeks and Romans. They are often spoken of in Karen lore as dwelling on Mount "Thaw Thi," as Zeus in Greek mythology had his abode on Mount Olympus.[2] In the celebration of family rites and feasts the "Mü xa" are recognized by having words addressed to them, although the family spirits, commonly designated as "Bgha," are often thought of as the powers to be propitiated at this ceremony. In some sections of the country the "parents of mankind" are supposed to receive offerings in their extended hands, which are thereby cleansed. They are then expected to return to their celestial abode, the hope being that they will not descend again to the dwelling-place of mortals, lest, by some mischance, they should become offended and bring misfortune upon men. They are believed to be able to assume any form they wish and to render themselves visible or invisible at will.[3]

776 137 824 136 137 One member of this group, called "Mü xa hkleu," is thought to preside over the much-venerated banyan *(Ficus religiost)*. It was under a banyan tree that Gautama Buddha received his enlightenment. The banyan is, however, held sacred by most of the tribes of Indo-China, even though they are not Buddhists. No doubt the wonderful vitality of the seeds of this tree which germinate anywhere, especially in the crotches of other trees and in the head of the palm, later enveloping, killing, and thriving on its host, has helped to evoke the veneration of the peoples familiar with the banyan. According to the Karen legends, the rhinoceros ("ta do hkaw") is the beast on which the guardian spirit of the banyan tree is accustomed

[2] See Chapter XXV in regard to Mount "Thaw Thi," pp. 262-264.
[3] For a description of the rites tendered to the "Mü xa" see pp. 248, 254, 260.

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to ride when searching for the "k' las" of human beings. Any person who kills one of these animals arouses the enmity of the spirit.

The "Hti k' sa kaw k' sa," or "lords of the water and land," or "lords of the earth," are the deities who rule over the lands of the earth. They are superior to the spirits that preside over rivers and mountains and have tempers that are easily disturbed. Ill-spoken words, as well as improper and immoral actions, easily offend them; and they take vengeance on persons guilty of such misdemeanors by sending tigers, snakes, and various illnesses upon them. They are sometimes confused with the king of hades, who also passes judgment on the sins of mortals. One way to avoid angering the lords of the earth is to scrape a little rice from the top of the pot while cooking and lay it aside as an offering to them. Concerning their relation to these divinities, the people say that if they transgress in their language while in a distant land, the lords of the earth will kill them before dark; but if guilty of swearing or using indecent words in their own country, they can assuage the anger of these spirits by making an offering of rice and water at the foot of a tree and uttering the following prayer: "O Lords of the earth, we are ignorant people. Whatever transgressions we have been guilty of in using harsh or obscene words, do not, O Lords, hold them against us. We will make offerings annually. If we do not die, you shall eat of our food every year and of our children's offerings generation after generation."

Every tree, river, lake, and, indeed, almost every natural object is supposed by the Karen to be inhabited by its "k' sa" or divinity. These local spirits, however, are regarded by many as constituting lower orders of the divinities of the first group. When a man selects the location for his field, he must perform certain ceremonies to win their good will. The simplest of these is to place offerings of rice and water at the foot of some large tree in the plot chosen or to go through the ceremonies described in the chapter on Agricultural Pursuits and Other Occupations.[4] There are also the annual sacrifices to these spirits that have been described fully in the chapter on Propitiatory Sacrifices and Healing Offerings, pp. 234, ff.

The nefarious work and character of "Naw k' plaw" or "Mü kaw li" have been sufficiently revealed in the narration of the story of his temptation of the first parents of the Karen race in the

[4] See ante, pp. 76, ff.

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CHAPTER XXIII

PROPITIATORY SACRIFICES AND HEALING OFFERINGS

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The rites and sacrifices of the Karen people seem almost innumerable. As we have seen elsewhere, their offerings are designed to placate the evil powers and win the favor of the good. It is difficult to discover the exact meaning of the numerous ceremonies; for the people are reticent about them, fearing that the demons may overhear and learn their motives or other matters connected with the rites that may anger them. Often persons who are performing some ceremony do not pretend to know its meaning, frankly admitting that they do not understand but are simply following the customs of the elders. Offerings that seem nearly alike to the foreign resident in Burma have their special significance for the Karen, being made to different demons, or at special times, or as preventives, cures, etc. The religion of the Karen is not one of love and worship, but largely of fear of the occult powers by which they believe themselves to be surrounded. Their ceremonies and offerings are, therefore, inspired by personal and utilitarian motives, namely, to avert danger and bring good fortune. Hence, it is not uncommon for the ritualist to make his offering not to a single demon but to "all you evil spirits." Since the "k'la" or life principle of human beings is supposed to be the normal food of these spirits, sickness is to be avoided or cured by offerings of the most savory foods, drink, and other things that may tempt the hungry demon from the person whose shade it is trying to devour.

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For convenience we may divide the propitiatory ceremonies into three classes. One group comprises those acts of homage, sometimes elaborate, in which the demons are invoked with sacrifices and rites, as in the case of the offerings to the lords of the land and water ("Hti k' kaw k' sa"), to the "Mü xa," and to the "Bgha" of the particular family. The second group consists of the rites used in placating evil demons who may be feeding upon the "k' la" of a sick person. These take the form of offerings and appeals to the wandering shade to return to its proper abode. The third group is that in which the offerings are made to the shade

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itself, when it has left the body of its own volition or on account of a sudden fright, and is liable to become lost in the jungle. In such cases the "k' la" must be lured back and induced to remain in the body it normally animates.

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The "Hti k' sa kaw k' sa" are the powers that rule the earth and that most abhor the sins of lust.[1] It is to these powers that the Sgaw and Bwe tribes make a periodic sacrifice ("Ta lu hpa do" or the great sacrifice), ordinarily once in three years, but when the crops fail because of their sins, as they think, as often as once a year. The sacrifice serves the double purpose of honoring the lords of the land and water and purging the people of their carnal sins. When, therefore, the tribes enjoy a prolonged period of prosperity, they consider themselves morally acceptable to the powers and delay their sacrifice for four or even five years.[2]

A. The Great Sacrifice of the Sgaw

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Among the Sgaw the great sacrifice is ordered by the most influential chief of the country, his directions being given to those chiefs who are willing to acknowledge his superiority and by them in turn to their villages. The time being appointed, a suitable spot near a good stream is chosen to which every family is expected to bring a boar and a white fowl, while the chiefs each bring a bullock or a goat. An altar of bamboo with seven posts on each side is erected, the roof of which consists of seven tiers each smaller than the one below, like that of a Buddhist palace. Posts are set round to which the sacrificial creatures are tied. On the day named for the ceremonies a jar of liquor is placed at the foot of each post, and a young man is appointed by each chief to kill his animal after a prayer has been uttered by the great chief. During the prayer the young men stand holding their "xeh" (sickles) over their victims, while the chiefs place their hands on the animals. The prayer is as follows:

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"O Lords of the land and water. O Lords of mercy. Lest the country should be stricken and the grain destroyed; lest the people should be distressed and a pestilence come upon them, we put our sins on these buffaloes, oxen, and goats.[3] From this day henceforth may it please you to disregard our sins. Let

[1] See page 225.

[2] Dr. Mason in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 212, ff.; Rev. T. Than Bya in *Karen Customs*, pp. 20, ff.

[3] In these ceremonies one can readily see the similarity to that of the scapegoat of ancient Israel. (Lev. 16:21-23). For a full discussion of this widespread idea, see Sir J. G. Frazer's article on "The Scape Goat," in *The Golden Bough*, Vol. IX.

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539 illness not come upon our people. O ye Great Spirits that rule the heaven and the earth, receive our offerings and have mercy upon us. From now on may our land be fruitful, may the work of our children prosper, may they keep well. Forget our evil deeds, which bring distress. May these things come to pass because of the offerings that we are now making."

782 787 The young men hamstring the animals and cut their throats as soon as the chiefs remove their hands. The blood is poured around the place of sacrifice. The gall-bladders are examined to see if they are full and well-rounded. If so, the sacrifice is thought to be acceptable. Otherwise, it is evident that the sins of the people are not yet absolved and will not be, until they provide satisfactory animals. Assuming, however, that the first offering proves to be acceptable, the hair is burned off of the animals. Their heads and feet are cut off and laid upon the altar, and seven bamboo water-joints are fastened to its posts. When the flesh is cooked the great chief goes to the altar, takes some rice and meat on a silver tray, fills all of the bamboo joints and puts some of the food down at various places on the altar. He then eats a morsel himself, after which each of the others eat in turn.

783 While this ceremony is in progress, every one must confess his sins. If there is any doubt about a person, he must remove it either by the water ordeal or by that of climbing a tree. The water ordeal consists of two parts. First, the person doubted and the one doubting him take each a plantain stem and toss it into the swift current of the river. The chief notes which stem is thrown up higher by the water. Second, this part is far more serious: it consists in pushing the two men under the water and holding them there by means of forked sticks across their necks. The first one struggling up for air is accounted the loser. If he is the same one whose plantain was tossed lower than that of his opponent, he is regarded as surely guilty.

In the ordeal of tree climbing the contending men are sent in turn up a tree that has been cut around the foot until almost ready to fall. The climber must ascend to the top and throw down a garment so deftly as not to touch any one of a number of spears set up around its base. During the test the tree must not sway or creak, much less fall. The one who performs this feat with the least disturbance to the tree is the winner.

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B. The Bwe Sacrifice

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The Sgaw offer their great sacrifice in January.[4] The Bwe, however, make their offering in July when the paddy is well started. They sacrifice one hog in a central spot of the village lands, first erecting a booth under a eugenia tree, which they consider sacred. Four elders act as priests, their functions being herediatary.[5] Each man cuts three bamboos, one to represent a post of his paddy-bin and the other two to show the height he wants the grain to be in his bin. Then he makes a miniature bin, a long pen, a trap, and a snare. When the people assemble, only the most prosperous elders sit with the priests in the booth. No women are allowed to be present. [562]

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The leader takes a sprig from a eugenia tree and raises it in his clasped hand to heaven and prays, the others doing likewise. The leader then spears the hog; and, when the blood flows, all seize their bamboos and cry out: "May my paddy be as high as these bamboos." Some declare that they have caught many rats in their traps and others that they have snared many wild fowls, in proof of their purpose to protect the growing grain. Others dance and shout, while some beat gongs or blow bamboo pipes.

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The hog is then carried to the village to be cooked. Each man also provides a fowl. When all the food has been prepared, it is brought back to the booth; and, after a prayer much like that quoted above, they set out the food but eat none of it. On their way back to the village they dance and sing and spend the night in revelry. Next morning they return to the booth, and the priests begin to eat of the food left there, all being allowed to partake; but any one who considers himself unholy must not eat, for the food is sacred. Not only persons guilty of immoral conduct, but also men whose wives are pregnant are under tabu.

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After the feast, when they have again danced their way back to the village, the chiefs draw two joints of water for each family and carry them into the village. The families are then called out on their verandas and each family group, including the women and children, is sprinkled with water from one of the joints brought for it. The other is carried to the field next morning by the head of

[4] So far as I have been able to ascertain, it seems to have been many years since one of these great sacrifices has been observed by the Sgaw Karen of Lower Burma. I have been able to get no contemporary accounts of such a ceremony. As to the length of time since the Bwe have held such a sacrifice, I can give no definite information.

[5] See p. 247 on priests among the Bwe.

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782 the family, and its contents are sprinkled on the grain. This rite is supposed to cleanse the families from evil and to produce good [783] crops. The four priests officiate under special names, of which three signify, respectively, lord of the village, messenger, and

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KAREN GIRLS POUNDING PADDY IN A MORTAR OUT-OF-DOORS

keeper of the village. I do not know the meaning of the fourth title. During the ceremony they wear embroidered tunics, longer than ordinary garments. From the people they receive gifts of beads and ear ornaments. In some villages a bullock is substituted for the hog, and in one of the Mopgha villages near Toungoo the inhabitants require a coal-black bullock, being willing to pay a large price in order to obtain one.

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C. The Small Sacrifice of the Sgaw

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Besides the great sacrifice offered by the Sgaw to the lords of the land, they also make a small sacrifice ("Ta lü hpo") to the same powers. A few men—the exact number being determined by divination—build a little booth in the jungle and clear three paths leading from it. They sacrifice a white fowl, letting some of its blood into a bamboo joint containing liquor. Some of the blood is smeared on the outside of the joint and on the posts of the booth, and feathers from the fowl are stuck to it. A kind of broom is made by splitting a bamboo, with which they beat the booth, while praying: "O Lords of the land and water. Let the sick member of my family change places with this fowl. Forgive his sins and free him from disease." Sometimes they address their prayer to the water-witch: "We are offering thee the blood of this fowl. Eat this and go thy way. Do not come near us." After cooking and eating the fowl, they color a little cotton thread yellow and wind it about their water-joint. Having returned home, they draw water and sprinkle some of it on the sick person. A piece of the colored thread is then tied around his waist so that the demon may identify him as the one for whom the offering was made. They must not permit any one to accompany them on their sacrificial journey or to converse with them.

II. Offerings for the Sick

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The small sacrifice described above is one of the offerings for the sick, but because it is made to the lords of the land rather than to the evil spirits who entice away and feed upon the "k'las" of human beings, I have grouped it with the offerings to those deities. Certain demons are malicious and require placating and diverting to keep them from indulging in this practice, which results in the illness and perhaps the death of the persons involved. Divination may indicate that some particular demon, for example, one of the water-witches ("Na hti") or one of the ghosts of tyrants that dwell in the jungles ("T're t' hka"), is engaged in this nefarious work. If so, the rites peculiar to that demon must be executed in an effort to induce it to leave the village and follow the person carrying the offerings to some lonely spot in the jungle, there to remain and partake of the aroma of the feast, much as one would entice

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753 787 782 a pig from rooting in the garden to follow an ear of corn back to its pen. Having gone through this performance, the carrier stealthily returns, trying on the way to deceive the demon into believing that he has taken some other trail by blocking the one he has actually followed, and fondly thinking that he has removed the cause of the sickness of the member of his household.

I am led to believe that many offerings are made in remote districts that belong in this group, although I have obtained no accurate account of them. The recital in the succeeding paragraphs will suffice, however, to convey a general idea of the nature of these rites, in all of which, when the ceremony is concluded, the wrist of the patient is tied around with a string to keep the "k'la" from getting away again.[6]

The offering made when the "T're t' hka," or ghosts of evil tyrants that inhabit the deep jungles, wander into the village and attack the "k' la" of some one, is called "Ta taw law ta." This rite requires the weaving of a small basket, in the bottom of which cotton is laid, and on this four lumps of cooked rice, one colored black with soot, another yellow with tumeric, the third red with amotta berries (from the *Bixa orellana*), and the fourth left white. A chick is tied to the basket, being made secure by binding both its wings and its feet. Finally, sprigs of yellow and white cockscomb are laid in the basket.

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The basket thus fitted out is carried beyond at least two ridges of hills to a place from which it is believed the demon will not be able to find its way back. There the basket is set down with its contents, and the following petition is offered: "We are bringing you red and yellow rice and yellow and white flowers, O Great 'T're t' hka.' Go back to your own place. Keep away from us." The performers of this rite may sweep a spot under the basket and pick up a clod of earth near at hand. Calling the "k'la" to follow them they leave the chick and rice with the basket to be the food of the ghost and return home. As they go along they break off branches which they place in the path to throw the demon off their track, should he attempt to follow them.[7] On arriving at the house, they

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[6] It is not uncommon to see a black line tatooed about a Karen's wrist, the obvious purpose of which is to serve as a permanent hindrance against the escape of his "k'la," thus preventing sickness.

[7] In traveling if one who goes ahead wishes to warn those following not to take a certain path, one puts branches across its entrance. Thus, notice is given that the path is "killed" and not to be taken.

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call out to ask whether the patient has recovered or not, and, on being assured that he has, they ascend the ladder and put a bit of the clod in the hole of his ear-lobe, believing that they have taken ample measures to promote his recovery.

In performing the ceremony called "Ta hu law pa law," a bundle containing a handful of chaff, a piece of broken pot, and a few chicken feathers is used to touch the sick person, while "Ta mü to xa, Ta yu ta pleh" are addressed as follows: "O Spirits and very bad Witches, we are cooling your anger lest you look with longing eyes on this person. Restore and heal him. Go back to your places, east, west, north, or south. Return to your own abodes." The bundle is then borne out along a path indicated by the omens and left there. The person carrying it pretends to retire into the jungle, but really returns home.

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In the rite known as "Ta taw the hka heh" the patient's friends carry to a considerable distance a little basket containing a chick and a prepared betel quid. A similar petition to that given above is then uttered, and the chick is split in halves and replaced in the basket, which is hidden in some hollow tree or rock crevice. Again a plea is made, the basket and its contents are left behind, and a circuitous route home is followed, the bushes along the way being cut in order to convince the demons by the marks of the knife that they will be cut by it, should they follow after.

The rite performed when the water-witches are supposed to have enticed a "k'la" away is called "Ta lu hti htu hti." A fowl of one color must be carried down to the water, where a small altar is erected of two rows of twelve posts each, the two rows converging like the rafters of a roof. The fowl is killed and its blood smeared on the posts, four feathers being stuck on each of the corner posts. The lords of the water and the lakes, the water-witches, are then besought, in case the sick person has invaded their province in any way or they have caused his illness, to partake of the fowl, sweet liquor, and rice that are provided and allow the "k'la" to return and the person to recover. The petition closes with the words: "Do not look with longing eyes upon him, but eat your feast here." The sick man's friends then cook and eat the fowl and return home.

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It appears that sometimes the water-witches are offended by a person who is in bathing and cause him to become ill with cramps or indigestion. In such a case rice, saffron, and spices are placed

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upon the head of the offender and then taken to a rock at the water-side. The witches are summoned by repeatedly striking the rock and urged to enjoy their feast there.

The ceremony, "Ta di law kweh leh," is performed with a bundle containing a handful of chaff, bits of broken pot, a piece of bamboo, some scrapings of gold and silver, and a fowl. After the patient has been touched with this bundle, the demons of "Plü" (hades), the king of hades, and the Great Elephant ("Ta do k' the, ta do k' saw") are addressed as follows: "I am exchanging the sick person for a big bird and a big fowl, for quantities of gold and silver. Let his shade depart. If you hold him, go." The bundle is then carried out along the road and laid down, and the fowl is plucked. The latter is brought home, the bushes along the way being beaten with a bamboo with split ends, while the "k'la" is summoned to follow. On arriving near the house, the friends call to those within to see if it has returned. On receiving a favorable reply, they enter, tie up the wrist of the sick person, and cook the fowl.[8]

A different form of the above ceremony is described by Thra Than Bya.[9] According to his account, the friends carry only a fowl to the place on the road and there place a dead leaf on a little mound of earth, after which they call the "k' la" to return. Then they take the fowl home and cook it, and, after the sick one has eaten a morsel, the rest of the family partake.

Another form of the offering by the roadside is called "Ka law ta." In this instance a bamboo post about four feet long is set up, the upper end of which is split and the splints spread apart by weaving in and out a piece of bamboo. Upon this a little mat of loosely woven bamboo is laid, on which are placed three chicken feathers, a few pieces of egg shell, and a roll of cotton blackened with charcoal at three points. The feathers seem to represent a fowl and the cotton a pig, for the one making the offering says, addressing the demons in general: "I am giving you a pig and a fowl. Do not come near me any more. Help me and heal me." This offering differs from any of the others mentioned in this chapter in that it is sym-

[8] I am told that now, with the waning of the faith in these old customs, the person who has taken out the offering occasionally becomes angry if the people in the house do not give a favorable answer concerning the return of th "k' la" and the improvement of the patient, and refuses to repeat the ceremony, as he is supposed to do.

[9] Rev. T. Than Bya, *Karen Customs*, p. 30.

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bolic, and also in the fact that the patient performs the rite in his own behalf.

III. Offerings to the "K'la" Itself

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Sometimes the auspices indicate that the "k' la" of an ill person has departed by reason of fright or from some other cause than being enticed by a malicious demon. The place to which it has gone and the method by which it may be won back are also shown by the omens. In such cases the appeal and offerings are made to the "k' la" itself.

In performing the rite known as "Ta kweh k' la hpa do" (the great ceremony of calling the "k'la"), two black fowls, namely, a cock and a hen, must be killed by wringing their necks. Their internal organs must be cleaned and replaced and the birds cooked whole. They are then laid on a tray on which are three Malay apple leaves, seven lumps of cold rice, and a cup of fragrant water.[10] The tray with its contents is set at the head of the stairs or ladder, and a lighted candle is placed there. A white cotton thread is carried from the tray to the foot of the stairs and fastened. The fragrant water, after being blown upon by the head of the house, is sprinkled on the family and on the stairs.[11] A lump of rice is then charmed and thrown down the stairs, which are beaten with a stick, and the "k' la" of the invalid is summoned. The call is: "Pru-u-u k'la,[12]—heh ke, heh ke. (O Shade, come back, come back.)" If for any reason it is thought that the shade has not heeded this call, the operation is repeated until the family feels assured that it has returned. They then immediately break the string by means of which it has ascended the stairs and throw it away, lest it should again escape. With other pieces of string they tie up the wrists of the sick person and the other members of the family, meanwhile calling the "k' la" to remain. The patient is bathed all over with what is left of the fragrant water and is then expected to recover.

The rite of "Ta kweh k' la," or inviting the "k'la" to return, is performed in the house, like the one described above. The family

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[10] The leaves named (those of the "thabye" or *Eugenia malaccensis*) are generally used for this purpose, but I do not know why.

[11] When the Karen on the plains perform these ceremonies, in which the wandering "k'la" is expected to return to the house by the ladder, they retain the old-fashioned notched log that has served from time immemorial as the means of entrance to the house, but that is being superseded in modern houses by flights of stairs. They think the "k'la" will more easily return by the kind of stairs to which it has been accustomed.

[12] "Pru-u-u-" is a sort of trill which the women use in calling their children, pigs, or fowls, as well as their "k' las."

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782 elder takes the stirring-stick from its hole in the fireplace post and
753 strikes the top of the house ladder to attract the attention of the
755 "k'la," which he begs to return, saying: "Pru-u-u we, pru-u k' la, come back, whether you have gone to the west, east, north, or south; come back, whether you are in the bush, jungle, or ends of the earth; come back to your pleasant dwelling, to your comfortable home. I will prepare delicious pork and fowl for you. Eat of your rice and drink of your liquor. Do not wander off any more." Then the animal specified in the divination is killed—pig, fowl, goat, ox, or buffalo—and if a fowl, its bones are examined for the omen, which is favorable in case the holes are even in number. In case one of the animals has been indicated, the performers of the rite look for a rounded gall-bladder. If the auspices are unfavorable, they must repeat the whole operation until they find the conditions satisfactory. The animal is then cut up, cooked, and the feast proceeds. During these ceremonies every member of the family must be present.

787 The rite, "Ta waw k'la" (driving back the "k'la"), has some
782 features not found in the one described in the preceding paragraph
753 and is performed in the jungle and along the paths where the ghost
755 has disappeared, as revealed by the divination. The man of the house splits the end of a bamboo pole into four splints and spreads them into a crude broom, which he takes to the place where the "k'la" became lost. With a prayer similar to that quoted above he calls the wandering "k'la" and beats the bushes all the way home. Before entering, he asks the usual question about the return of the ghost and receives the usual answer. Mounting to the house, he beats the top of the ladder with the stirring-stick, repeating the invitation to the "k'la" to return and then beats the posts of the fireplace, asking repeatedly if it has come back and getting the same reply. Finally, the animal or fowl is killed and the omen declared. In case it is favorable, the feast proceeds.

The rite for the return of a "k'la" thought to have been driven off by the wind is called "Ta yaw ke a k'la." A bracelet is suspended by a string from the tip of a slender bamboo over a cup containing a little sticky rice and a hard-boiled egg. The elder strikes the cup with the stirring-stick and begs the "k'la" to come back out of the winds, the storm, the firmament, from near the stars or the moon, and eat the egg. The string supporting the bracelet is

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usually poorly spun, and the suspended object twists back and forth until finally the string parts, and the ornament drops into the cup. A person standing near claps a cloth over the receptacle to confine the "k'la." If an air-space is found at the end of the egg, it is a sign that the shade has returned; if not, the experiment must be repeated.[13]

The ceremony, "Ta hpi htaw ke a k'la," is in order when a person's sickness is attributed to the detention of his "k'la" under the water or in a swampy place. The auspices having shown the necessity for this rite and the kind of creature to be sacrificed, the performers of the rite throw up a little mound at the foot of the ladder with a sharp bamboo stick or other implement, and set upon it in order bundles of glutinous rice and jars or bamboo joints of liquor. The victim, say a fowl, is plucked, and, after the shade has been attracted by making a noise, it is addressed as the great "k'la": "If you have been drowned in the water or are anywhere under the mud or the ground; if you have been led astray in the water or the mire," says the leader, "I beg you to come back to your pleasant dwelling, to your comfortable home. Come eat delicious pork and toothsome chicken. Come and partake of sweet liquor and white rice." The victim is struck on the head with the stirring-stick, killed, and the omens examined. If these prove to be favorable, the fowl is cooked and the feast is held. As is usual in such ceremonies when the shade is believed to have returned, the wrist of the patient is tied with string to prevent its wandering again. A piece of the string, together with a morsel of the rice and meat, is placed on the fontanel ("hko hti") of the patient, which is considered the seat of the "k' la."

Prophets and Elders

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The propitiatory sacrifices discussed in the first section of this chapter are evidently tribal functions and are, therefore, inaugurated by the chiefs. Formerly men called "wi," especially designated as prophets, were consulted to interpret the auspices. On occasion they went into trances in order to reveal secrets. Their office in most of the Karen tribes was for life or while they maintained a good character, and it involved a knowledge of the ancient poetry of

[13] See p. 207 of Chapter XX (Funeral Customs) for a similar method of determining the presence of the "k' la" of the dead.

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the folk by which the traditions and customs were handed down from generation to generation. Among the Bwe, who seem to have esteemed priests more than the other tribes, there were four of these prophets who presided over the great sacrifice, the eldest being regarded as high priest. When one of them died, the elders assembled and chose which of his sons should inherit the office. Then, earrings, a headband, richly ornamented clothing, and a silver-mounted sword were secretly prepared for the ceremony of installation. A delegation of the elders took these gifts to the house of the chosen one, an elder going ahead to ascertain that he was at home. The party, being assured of his presence, surrounded the house to prevent his escape, which he must feign attempt. The presents were then cast before him. If he really desired to escape, he must do so before the house was surrounded.

In case the elders did not find the chosen successor at home, they laid in wait for him either by the path approaching the house or within the house itself. Sometimes an elder climbed up under the roof, hid himself until the man returned, and then dropped the gifts at his feet. The appurtenances of the priestly office, having been presented, could not be refused.[14] In some instances a "wi" was also a chief, serving thus as a leader in the tribe and in its magic. In any case he was a most important personage and was held in awe by the people.[15] Only a few of these men now remain.

The healing offerings dealt with in the second and third sections of this chapter fall generally within the province of the village elders, or are often performed by the members of the family of the sick person, for almost everybody knows more or less how to make the offerings, though this is not so true at the present time as it was a generation ago.

[14] Bunker, *Soo Tha*, pp. 66, ff.

[15] For the "wi's" connection with magic, see p. 278.

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CHAPTER XXIV

FEASTS TO THE "BGHA"

THE CEREMONIAL OF THE FEASTS

776 782 "Mü xa do" (the great "Mü xa" or king of the "Mü xa") is the demon most intimately connected with the affairs of men. He may serve as their guardian and protector if properly propitiated with offerings; but he is more often feared as the author of all kinds of evil. Some Karens, especially in Shwegyin, regard him as a household deity to whom the family offer their sacrifices called "ta aw Bgha" (to eat the "Bgha"). He is addressed as "Thi Hko Mü Xa," and is evidently regarded as the lord of demons.[1] In most parts of the Sgaw Karen country, however, the "Bgha" is mentioned as being distinct from "Mü xa do" and, in a special way, as the tutelary god of the family by whom it is reverenced and feared. It is supposed to subsist upon the "k'las" or shades of the members of the family, if it is not provided generously with pork and chicken; and even then the family's immunity may not be assured. In their prayers and offerings the people sometimes associate the "T'reh t' hka" with the "Bgha," the former having, as I understand it, no connection with the family. Perhaps this is a precaution taken in the hope of appeasing whichever spirit may be responsible for the misfortune they are trying to alleviate.

769 A veneration of ancestors is manifest all through the family ceremonies treated in this chapter. The ancestors are thought of as taking an interest, although not always a friendly one, in the affairs of living men. The Karen do not, however, indulge in ancestor worship to the extent that the Chinese practice it.

776 The family "Bghas" are said to be eternal. As new unions take place and households are set up generation by generation, each family finds itself provided with a "Bgha" of its own. But what the relation of the new crop of "Bghas" is to that of the preceding generation, no one is able to explain.

887 611 562 The grandmother or the eldest female in the direct line of the family presides as the high priestess at the "Bgha" feast of the

[1] Dr. Wade in *The Karen Thesaurus*, new ed., Vol. I., p. 488.

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whole family. She is the "Bgha a' hko." This custom seems to hark back to the matriarchal stage of development among the Karen, as also does the fact that the groom goes to live with the bride's family. Why a woman should hold the place of honor at the "Bgha" feast has been "explained" to me in two ways, namely, (1) that a female was the first person to fall under the influence of "Mü kaw li" (Satan) in the orchard, and (2) that as the woman is the more susceptible to sickness, she properly has more to do with the offerings and should take the leading part in making them. The Karen maintain that the elders are responsible for these explanations and that the ceremonial of the "Bgha" feast has come down from time immemorial.

There are three kinds of "Bgha" feasts. The most familiar kind is that observed by the members of the immediate family when one of their number has fallen sick, in case divination shows that his illness is due to his having offended the "Bgha." In such a case the family must at once join in a feast. The second kind of feast is that observed as a preventive of possible sickness and as a means of keeping on good terms with the "Bgha." This is known as "ta aw bwaw a' tha" (eating to strengthen one's heart). The third kind of feast is that participated in by all the kindred, when the most elaborate rites are celebrated. Such a feast is called "ta aw saw ke saw na." While there is a general resemblance among the feasts held all over the Karen country, the various tribes and even parts of the same tribe differ in the details of their observances.

In the case of an illness found by divination to be due to the "Bgha," the ceremonial of the feast among the Sgaw Karen of the Tharrawaddy district and in the Pegu Hills, is as follows: After a pot of rice has been set on the fire to boil, a fowl is caught and killed, and its feathers are burned off in the fireplace. It is then cut up and cooked with salt and a chili and placed on the table or family tray. The father, mother, and children in the order of their ages severally partake of a morsel, after which they eat their meal together. If the parents of the father and mother are living, the feast is held in the morning; but if they are dead, it is held in the afternoon. On the following morning a pig is caught, brought into the house, and its legs are tied together. It is then killed by strangulation or by wrenching the neck, care being taken not to break any of its bones or bruise its skin lest some of its blood should be spilled. The body of the pig is then run through lengthwise on

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a spit, its bristles are burned off, and it is then carried into the house and laid at the head of the sleeping-mats. The father and other members of the family touch the side of the animal with the tips of their fingers. In Shwegyin and Siam this rite is still observed, but in many other localities it has been discontinued. The pig is now ready to be cut up and cooked, after which the members of the family each taste of the meat in turn, avoiding eating anything from the hind-quarters that day and from the fore-quarters the next, in case their grandparents are living. If, however, their grandparents are dead, they may eat from any part of the animal. After having thus each taken a morsel, they complete their meal. If any is left after the feast, it is not uncommon nowadays for the family to invite in some of their neighbors to finish the remainder. This is contrary to the old practice among the Karen.

In the remoter regions, where the complete ceremonial is still observed, its main features differ but little from those described above, but the details are much more fully observed, and I will, therefore, describe the ceremonial as it is carried out in those areas. The rice having first been cooked, the water from it must be poured into the fireplace and the pot set down in the wet ashes, while the chicken is caught by the wife who brings the fowl into the house and hands it to her husband. He holds it under his arm, strokes its beak toward the point, and says: "Take away sickness. Remove weariness and swellings. Give me life and health for a hundred years." Then the wife and each child in turn stroke the chicken's beak, while the father repeats the same prayer for each one. He next wrings the fowl's neck, scalds the bird in a jar of water, plucks its feathers and carefully puts them in a receptacle by the fire, and removes the intestines and places them with the feathers. The flesh is cut up, cooked, and served, each member of the family taking a morsel. The father now places a small quantity of the rice and chicken on a tray and summons "the great ancestors of old" to partake. Meantime, the family eat the feast, after which the father throws away the offering. The pig is eaten on the following day, but in Siam two days are allowed to elapse before this part of the feast is celebrated. In preparation for this event the father goes into the jungle after an early breakfast, taking with him one of his children or, if he has no child, calling some other boy to accompany him. He carries a small basket and his "xeh" or sickle. He returns with two pieces of bamboo, each two full joints in

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length, some plantain leaves, and a pole long enough to serve as a spit for the pig. He cuts one of the bamboo pieces into two sections in which to cook the rice and curry, and splits the other bamboo into withes. After the rice has been cooked, the mother mixes a little of it with chaff, puts some of it in a small pot and a lump of it on top of the pot, besides sprinkling water on the fireplace.

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A [illegible] Karen Grandmother

Later the lump of chaff and rice is used as a bait in catching the pig that is to become the offering. Two withes of the outside and two of the inside of the bamboo are used in tying the feet of the animal, and one more of each kind to bind the feet together. Other withes are wound around the snout, one turn being passed through the mouth, which is thus closed securely. The pig is now carried into the house and laid on plantain leaves spread on the floor, a winnowing-tray being placed in front of it along with the

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pot of rice and chaff and a small bamboo cup ("maw"). Three times in succession the father touches first the pig and then the pot with the tips of his fingers, while addressing the "Bgha" as follows: "Avert all sickness from me. Let me be well and live a long life. I am feeding you with pork. Therefore, help me." The same petition is uttered as the other members of the family touch the pig in their turn. The father then strikes the animal three times with his "xeh" and stabs it thrice with a knife, but not to a greater depth than the width of four fingers. The killing of the pig is completed by binding its snout in a wet cloth to smother it and by wrenching its neck. The withes are now removed from its feet, and the carcass is carried to another part of the room and washed. After being laid again on the plantain leaves, an opening is made in its belly for the purpose of examining the gall-bladder. If this organ is plump, the omen is favorable and the feast may proceed. Otherwise, another pig must be sacrificed on the following day, and if necessary another, until a gall-bladder is found that meets the required conditions.

A satisfactory offering having been obtained, the intestines are removed and the carcass is impaled lengthwise on the sharpened stick brought from the jungle, and the bristles are burned off at a new fireplace built for the feast in the inner room of the house. After the body is washed it is butchered: first the head and stabbed shoulder being cut off in one piece, then the hind leg on the same side, next the fore and hind legs on the other side. The carcass is now opened down the front and down the middle of the back, the side that was stabbed being first removed and prepared. The wife puts the currypot on to boil, while her husband cuts up the meat, including the heart, liver, and lungs, some of which is dropped into one of the bamboo joints over the top of which a plantain leaf is tied. The other bamboo joint is filled with rice, and both vessels are set over the fire and watched carefully to prevent burning. However, the vessels must not be removed from the fire before their contents are thoroughly cooked, else the offering would be offensive to the "Bgha."

The rest of the pork is cooked in the currypot, which the wife has set on the fire. The wife must clean out the intestines, which she does outside the house. When she brings them in, the husband brushes off any ashes that may be on the top of the little pot and covers the mouth of it with a plantain leaf. He makes

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little holes in the covering and inserts short pieces of bamboo down into the pot obliquely, so as to hold the cover on. He then pours water in through these holes. He now makes a sort of standard, called "thi keh," out of a strip of bamboo. The bamboo is split into three strips, but not entirely separated. They are bound together at three points with withes, and then the two outer ones are broken between the bindings but only enough to make them stand out like arms akimbo. The lower ends of each of the side strips are bent out and then brought back and inserted in a hole, or under the lowest withe around the stock. This is set in the pot. What the significance of this is, neither my informant could tell me, nor do the reference books help one to find the meaning of it.

When the food has been cooked, the husband empties the rice on one tray and the pork on another; and the members of the family—father, mother, and the children in succession according to their ages—each take a morsel from both trays. Then the father takes a swallow from a pot containing water or liquor, being followed by the others in due order. He also pours out two cups of the liquid for the ancestors of the family and throws the rest away. He collects into a bundle the withes used in tying the feet of the pig and hangs it on the end of one of the floor joists at the rear of the house. Finally, he washes his hands and returns to join his family in finishing the feast.

In case the grandparents are living, they are summoned to the "Bgha" feast and arrive on the evening preceding the event. After breakfast next morning the preparations are made much the same as described above, but include the providing of three little bamboo cups ("maw") and the construction of a tiny model of a house ("hi hpo hkeh") about a foot long, which is set in front of the pig and in which the favorable gall-bladder of the animal is placed, together with its heart and the lung and kidney of the side that has been stabbed. The organs of the other side and any blood remaining in the abdominal cavity are placed on a tray. Only the flesh of the stabbed side is used at once. While it is cooking, the wife pounds some rice, moistened with a little water, until it is reduced to fine flour. Two of the cups are filled with a mixture of this flour, chopped pork, and a little blood, and hung over the fire to cook. The wife washes the intestines of the animal, while her husband arranges the "thi keh" as before and dishes out the food for the family. When all is ready each member of the household partakes of a morsel and

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
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782 sip of liquor, the grandfather and grandmother coming after the
753 children. This ceremonial being completed, all eat together. In
755 the afternoon the intestines are cooked and eaten. Next morning
796 the husband removes the heart, lung, and kidney from the miniature
787 house, cuts them up, and cooks them. These are eaten, the room is cleaned, the little house is thrown away, the grandparents return home, and the sick person for whom the feast has been held is supposed to recover.

In some places the intestines of the pig and the blood-stained plantain leaves are put in a basket and hung on a tree in the jungle as an offering to "Thi Hko Mü Xa," the lord of the demons.

782 The second kind of "Bgha" feast is not preceded by divination.
602 It is held not to cure sickness in the family, but to prevent it. When one of the parents begins to worry lest illness may visit the family, the "Bgha" is feasted and venerated and the hearts of the family are thus strengthened, as they express it. Hence, this feast is called "Ta aw bwaw a' tha." The ceremonial does not differ from that described above.[1]

The third kind of feast is that in honor of the great "Bgha," in which all the kindred by blood participate. It is, therefore, called the feast of the whole family ("ta aw saw ke saw na"). The eldest female of the family, the grandmother if living, or if not her eldest daughter or granddaughter, presides as chief priestess or head of the "Bgha" ("Bgha a' hko"). If the feast is held annually, it occurs in April or May; but the priestess may fix a time at her pleasure when she feels that the "Bgha" should be honored and propitiated. Those required to attend this feast of the kindred are the full brothers and sisters of the priestess, her sons, daughters, and daughters' children; but her husband, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, and their sons, together with her sons-in-law and the sons of her sons, are excluded and eat their feast with their own kindreds.

The eligible members of the family having assembled, the grandmother holds a pair of fowls, male and female, by their heads and says: "O Lord of the demons, we are offering to thee the flesh of fowls and pigs. Free us from all illness." After wringing the necks of the chickens, she orders their feathers to be burned off preparatory to cooking them with salt and chili only. Rice is also cooked. These viands are set out and the priestess eats a morsel, followed by her sons and each of the other relatives in the

1 [For description of ceremony, see p. 248 ff, Cat. 116 - Analys

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order of their ages. They are then ready to consume the feast of chicken and rice. As in the case of the other "Bgha" feasts, a repast of pork follows.

A pig is caught after dark, its feet are tied together, and it is carried up into the house where the whole family is present. It is laid on a plantain leaf on the floor in front of a miniature house set at the head of the grandmother's sleeping-mat. Placing her hand on the pig, she prays: "O Great Family Spirit and Spirit of the jungle ('Thi Hko Mü Xa, t' re t' hka'), we are offering you the flesh of fowls and of a swine. Do not harm us. When our children go out, if they happen to come near you, let them pass unmolested." Then each member of the family touches the side of the pig and afterwards the plantain leaf. After the animal has been beaten with the side of an axe or back of a sickle, but not hard enough to kill it or break any of its bones, it is strangled by pouring water down its nostrils while its head is wrenched to one side. The abdomen is cut open and the body smeared with the blood. The gall-bladder is removed, and, if it is full and round, the other internal organs are taken out. If the gall-bladder is flabby, they must repeat the sacrifice on succeeding days until they find a pig that affords the favorable omen. They are then ready to transfix the carcass with a spit, burn off the bristles at the special fireplace in the inner room, cut the body in twain lengthwise, and hang the upper half with the head over the miniature house. The lower half and intestines are now cooked with salt and chilis and served. The grandmother takes her morsel and the rest follow her example in turn, while she again utters the prayer to the great family spirit, after which they all eat heartily.

Next morning they cook the head and the portion that was hung up the day before, the shoulder of the lower side being the last piece to be cooked. This piece is carried into the jungle in a basket, where another prayer to the great "Bgha" is repeated. The ceremony is concluded by bringing back the shoulder, together with a clod of earth, giving a bit of this meat to each member of the family, and placing a little earth over one of the ears of each. In some parts of the hill-country the people place a pot of liquor in front of the tiny house and cook bamboo sprouts with the pork. After the cooking, the heart, liver, and spleen are taken out of the vessel and sparingly served with a little rice on three plantain leaves. The grandmother and the other members of the kindred

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supply themselves with pieces of plantain leaf and in turn help themselves from each of the three leaves while praying: "O Lord of the great spirits, do thou, who carest for us, prevent all sickness and sorrow from approaching us. May we be protected from injury by sharp sticks of bamboo and wood, by the arrows and spears of our enemies, and from all evil that may befall us. Wilt thou be our shield and defense." Through a small bamboo tube the grandmother-priestess drinks a little liquor from the pot, as do her relatives in their turn. She then points a newly sprouted plantain leaf at the skull of the pig, which has been hung up over her mat, and repeats the last prayer. Then all drink a little more of the liquor and are ready to follow the example of the priestess in partaking of the feast.

The earthen pot, in which the pork has been cooked, is intended to remind the kindred that they are children of the earth; while the bamboo joints, in which some of the offerings have been prepared, serve to keep before their minds the temporary character of their bamboo houses and utensils.

Customs Incidental to the "Bgha" Feasts

Certain customs and tabus incidental to the "Bgha" feasts should be noted. Unless all the members of the family are present at such a ceremony, except those excluded from the feast, the offerings are thought to be objectionable to the "Bgha." If a person absents himself from a feast that is being held to promote the recovery of a sick relative, he is suspected of desiring the continued illness or the death of the sick one. Or his absence may be interpreted as an effort to bring calamity upon some member of the family. Such charges are made against the member of a family who becomes a Christian and remains away from the ceremony. The others allege that he no longer retains his affection for his kindred and is willing to bring illness and disaster upon them by his absence, which angers the "Bgha."

While the feasts are in progress, no stranger is permitted to enter the family-room. When I first traveled in the hills, I noticed that as I passed through the corridor of a village-house some member of a family stood in the doorway of one or another of the family-rooms to prevent my entering. This seemed strange, in view of the fact that I was usually received with cordial hospitality. On inquiry I found that the guarding of the door was to keep me from

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unwittingly rendering their offerings futile. The advantage of the village guest-room then became clear to me. There I and other strangers could be entertained, and there the men who were ineligible to attend the feast of the family they had married into could congregate and visit, while their relatives were participating in the "Bgha" ceremony.

The idea of sacrifice is undoubtedly at the root of the "Bgha" feasts. According to the explanation of an old Karen woman, when one has offended the family spirit or, as the people say, has "hit the 'Bgha' " ("pgha ba Bgha"), one has fallen on the worst possible fate; for the demon will seek to devour the life principle ("k' la") of the unfortunate one, unless propitiated by offerings of chicken and pork. The "Bgha" is supposed to be satisfied with the "k' la" of these sacrifices, which constitute the best eating within the knowledge of the Karen people. Even those who no longer fear their "Bgha" will call in the members of their family and make a feast, principally on account of their own enjoyment of it. In such cases they add the spices for a curry, instead of cooking the meat with only salt and chili. The Karen, especially those of Shwegyin, declare that fornication, adultery, and incest anger the family spirits more than any other offenses. Such acts of immorality incite the "Bgha" to curse the soil, blight the crops, and send epidemics among the people. Once aroused, a "Bgha" will assume the form of a tiger or snake and wait for its victims, in order to destroy the "k'las" of the offenders and other inhabitants of their village. In case of a poor season and bad crops the elders become suspicious and sometimes succeed in scaring young persons into a confession of their secret sins. Unusual offerings are required to appease the offended demon, these being—according to one list in my possession—first, a buffalo, next, an ox, and finally, a chicken and a pig. All the family must unite in an earnest prayer that these offerings may prove acceptable to the "Bgha" and avert any further calamities from them. The great fear of blighted crops, and of other evils not less feared because unknown, tends to keep the Karen a chaste people, which they certainly are for the most part.[2]

The traditional explanation of the use of the chicken bones and the pig's gall-bladder in divination, and of pork and fowls in the family feasts, is that the chickens and pigs ate most of the fragments of the God-given book which the white brother delivered to

[2] See pp. 30, 139, 142, 148, 192, 225, 288.

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the Karen back in the mythological age, and which the latter carelessly burned when he set fire to the brush that he had cut from his field. What offerings more acceptable to the "Bgha" could be made than the creatures that had absorbed the wisdom of the divine book?[2] That the pig is regarded as a vicarious sacrifice is shown by the rite in which the members of the family touch the side of the animal, while the "Lord of the spirits" is asked to protect them from sickness and sorrow. However, the Karen do not charge the pig with a message to the great spirit, as do the Kenyah and Kayan tribes of Borneo;[4] nor do they put their sins on the pig, as did the ancient Hebrews on the head of the sacrificial bullock or on the scapegoat.[5] In Toungoo the dog is substituted for the pig in the family rites, the tradition there being that it ate some of the fragments of the book of wisdom. The Rev. E. W. Blythe is authority for the statement that the cat is also offered to the "Bgha" in Toungoo.[6] The Bwe and Red Karen tribes, among whom the ox, buffalo, and goat are the common domestic animals, use one or another of these creatures, according to the manifestations obtained through divination.[7] I am told that in Shwegyin there are some localities where the people do not sacrifice animals of any kind, but make offerings of flowers only.

The leaves used in the feasts must be those of the wild plantain ("ya"), which is found everywhere in the jungle throughout Burma; for the tradition is that it was this variety of plantain which "Htaw Meh Pa," the mythical ancestor of the Karen race, cut off in blazing the trail for his people to follow on the way to a more fruitful land.[8]

The miniature house ("hi hpo kheh") is intended as a resting-place for the "Bgha," when it comes to enjoy the feast provided for it. This tiny structure is set in the inner room where the pig is killed, the sacrificial fireplace built, and the feast held. This fireplace is a sacred family altar apart from the place where the cooking is carried on daily. The inner room affords greater privacy to the family during the feasts. The Pwo Karen have special trays and dishes for their feasts, which are kept sacredly for this purpose.

[2] Colonel A. R. MacMahon, *The Karens of the Gold Chersonese*, pp. 140, ff. For the story of the Lost Book see p. 333.

[4] Hose and MacDougall, *Pagan Tribes of Borneo*, Vol. II, pp. 60, ff.

[5] Leviticus, 16:21-22.

[6] Rev. E. W. Blythe in *The Rangoon Diocesan Quarterly*, 1917, p. 9.

[7] E. O'Riley in *Journal, Indian Archipelago*, 1859, p. 16.

[8] See *ante*, p. 5.

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784 cerned. In the hills the money is put in a hole in the bamboo ladde
177 leading into the house or, in lieu of a money payment, the fowl i
342 hung under the house. Some persons, who have received the fin
in the latter form, have shown a prejudice against eating it. I hav
been told that the British Government officials have upheld thi
tabu, when the collection of the fine has been resisted by the offend
ing party.

784 Perhaps there is no more widespread tabu among the Kare
551 people than that of personal names.[10] I have known some individual
for years without knowing their names and have used the commo
expedient of calling them by the name of their eldest son. A ma
who served as our cook for years in the Baptist school at Tharra
waddy I knew only as "Ba Gyaw's father;" although I did finall
discover his own personal name. For a boy to mention his father'
name is almost equivalent, according to Karen ideas, to the son'
wishing his parent's death; for the spirits, learning the latter'
identity, might destroy him. Instead of speaking of his wife, a ma
will talk of the mother of his children, or of his oldest chil
whose name he may think it safe to mention. Not long ago a youn
man of good education, who was engaged in filling his blank applica
tion for a marriage certificate, was confronted with the fact that h
was unable to give his mother's name. Not infrequently parent
bestow opprobrious names on their children, in order to deceive th
demons into thinking them too unworthy to be molested.

● 782 During the month of July, when the streams are in flood, th
787 people observe the tabu of the rising and falling of the waters ("t
823 dü ta htaw ta law"). They refrain from labor, make an offer
ing of a fowl all of one color on the path near a stream, and utte
the following prayer: "O Lord of the great water and the small
water, of the oceans and the lakes. We are offering you a larg
sweet fowl and sweet rice. Flow in your own banks as usual, s
that we shall not be drowned or fall into the water to be devoure
by crocodiles and dragons. Watch over us on our journeys, ea
our offerings, and do not molest us." They then examine the fowl'
bones and the gall-bladder of a pig, and, if the omens are favorabl
they swim the stream three times. In case no mishap occurs, the
believe that their offerings have been acceptable and that they wi
prosper. If the omens are not propitious the first time, they tr

[10] See Chapter XVIII on Birth Customs and Childhood, p. 170.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
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782 787 823 a second time and if necessary a third, in order to obtain a favorable response.

755 The Karen esteem the gall-bladder of a certain variety of fish as a valuable medicine, but assert that during the early days of August this medicinal organ becomes enlarged and "hot" (that is, flabby). They, therefore, consider it necessary to desist from work, in order to restore the gall-bladder to its normal condition and efficacy. During the other months this medicine is thought to be strong and useful in certain severe illnesses.

751 784 The time for gathering the herbs of which dyestuffs are made, is determined by divination. If, however, some one happens to pick them on a day found to be unfavorable, he becomes subject to a tabu, lest colds and coughs should spread throughout the village. To prevent this epidemic, the erring person must cut a sheaf of tall grass and set it up in the ashes of his fireplace, and when the other villagers come in they must spit on it. An elder then takes up the grass, saying: "May all coughs and colds be prevented. May we not catch them." Next, he leads the people out into a field, where he plies their heads and the stumps in the field with the sheaf until it is broken, meantime calling out: "Beat here. Beat there. Beat the tails of the demons and woodpeckers. Do not bring us illnesses, coughs, or colds." When he has finished, he leaves the frayed grass against a stump, and they all return to their houses. Finally, the elder asks in a loud voice: "Is every one well?" and they all shout back: "All are well." This is repeated three times, after which they all shut their doors and refrain from work during the rest of the day.

784 626 While all of these numerous tabus have helped to nourish the ancient superstitions of the Karen, it is well to remember that some of them, in the absence of other social and moral sanctions, have exercised a beneficial influence. Among the latter are the tabus against marriage outside of the tribe, and especially outside of the race. These tabus have been instrumental in maintaining the integrity of the various tribes and of the people as a whole, and in enabling the Karen to live largely apart from the corrupting influences of neighboring peoples. Other tabus have served to magnify the importance of the religious rites and to enforce a stricter morality than prevails among some primitive races. It is obvious that these benefits have been secured at a great economic cost, when one considers the large number of holidays which falls

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336. KARENS CUTTING THEIR CROP.

such an extent that they destroy whole crops and stocks of corn and produce famine. Towards harvest time birds have to be scared again. The rice crop is generally ripe before the last rains fall. A chance break is taken advantage of to cut, dry, and thresh the corn, which is got under cover in a bin on the *taungya*, or *punzo*, as it is called when done with. The secondary crops ripen later. Cucumbers, pumpkins, marrows, brinjals, and other coarse vegetables, and sometimes tomatoes, are sown on the margins and along the pathways. In a good season the Karéns get about double the quantity of grain they need for living. The whole of the secondary crop is for trade. In the moist ravines they cultivate the betel-palm and betel-vine, and they have taken to orange gardening at the foot of the hills. They also collect the wild betel-vine and honey by climbing high trees (No. 362); the tree-ladder is made by driving bamboo spikes into the wood. The only honey of Burma is wild; but bees frequent the limestone caves to such a degree that in some places the right to collect honey and wax in them is farmed out. Honey sells for ten annas and wax for two and a half rupees a viss. The staple food of the Karéns is rice. They make a curry in the Burman way; with it they eat *ngapi*, salt fish or fresh fish, or the flesh of pig and deer, especially the "small deer" they trap at the *taungya*. They keep goats, poultry and pigs, which latter are the scavengers of the villages. But the chief purpose for which these animals are bred is to be killed and offered to the *nats*, who have to be propitiated on all occasions. At every village site and clearing for cultivation a

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339. KAREN WOMAN COOKING.

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341. KAREN LIQUOR-STILL.

miniature bamboo hut is made (*tâ-khâ*, No. 337), and furnished with utensils or symbols of such. The joints of bamboo piled against the horizontal bar represent vessels for the blood of the offering; the whole offering is really appropriated by the votaries. The *yahán* have persuaded the Karéns under their influence to discontinue keeping animals, so as to be out of temptation to sacrifice to *nats*. The Karén idea of *nat* is exclusively an evil spirit, whereas the Burmans have the conception of *thadyâ* and *byammâ*, beings of a transfigured human nature; by them *nat* is chiefly used in this sense (p. 186). The Karéns also offer to the *nats* the liquor they brew (*kaung*), which is distilled from a wort made by setting boiled rice to ferment. The drinking of this offering at the shrine is accompanied by saltatory movements. What the Karéns can save, they invest in purchase of elephants (No. 333). Owing to the transient nature of the hill-settlements, the paths do not get well enough worn for pack-oxen. The elephant is the only beast of burden available to them; an elephant can carry five to ten hundredweight in the hills (No. 314). A small village clubs together to buy an elephant to carry in the corn and take the secondary crops to market; well-to-do villages own several elephants. Individuals who own a couple are accounted wealthy, but some own as many as twenty. They hire the animals out for carrying produce or for timber-work, or engage in this business on their own account. Their spare cash the Karéns bury in the earth or hide in growing bamboos. The point of the *dâ* is struck into a green culm so as to open a slit. The rupees are dropped in, the *dâ* pulled out, and not a trace remains. Karéns are good workers in bamboo and cane, and are excellent woodmen. They are expert in

342. KAREN HIDING COIN IN A GROWING BAMBOO.

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346. KAREN WITH DECOY-COCK.

Men and women labour out-of-doors till about sixty. The oldest women who can move make their daily journey for water, which is fetched and stored in joints of the giant bamboo. Old men occupy themselves with plaiting mats and baskets, and repairing gear. None are idle. The Karéns are acquainted with the medicinal virtues of many plants, such as bitter barks for ague. But all sickness and misfortunes are ascribed to the *nats*. Offerings and charms are relied on more than medicines. When a person dies, the body is treated with great respect, and every kind of offering is made to propitiate the spirit. The corpse is cremated, and the bones are buried at a place devoted to this use (*ayè-daung*), often at a distance, owing to the migrations of villages. Here a shrine is erected, consisting of a miniature hut, upon which a rude carving of a bird always figures. This symbolizes a mythical creature which conveys the spirit over rivers and chasms on its wanderings. For some time after a death, cotton threads are stretched beside the footbridges for the spirit to pass by on, without meeting the living. A shrine similar to that at the *ayèdaung* is made at a place where two roads cross, and at each shrine the clothing of the deceased, and sometimes new clothing and utensils, are dedicated. It is at funerals that the dreary Karén music is chiefly heard. The tones are very widely contrasted. The dirge is accompanied by the notes of the *pàzi*, a great drum of bronze, cast in the Shan country, in a single piece, though the metal is only the eighth of an inch thick. The *pàzi* is struck on the end with a padded hammer for the deep fundamental tone, and flicked on the side with a stick to bring out harmonics an octave or two higher.

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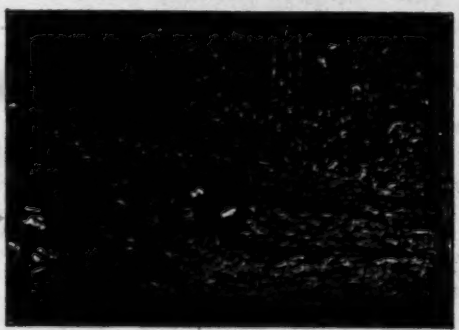

347. DECOY-COCK IN THE CIRCLE OF SHARES.

000 The *Karennî*, or "Red

101 [797] embraced Buddhism and more especially Christianity. The American Baptist Mission has been most successful among them and draws trainees for the missionary and teaching profession from the Karen. In the distant hill districts the tribes can still be found in their original civilization. There they still build their crude bamboo [342] huts, often one for several families (21). The

Many of them [i.e. Karen Andyt] have Karen AP7

21. Ferrars, ibid., p. 149.

Karenni (meaning red Karen) who live beyond the British administration zone, but still under British control, live together with a few kindred tribes in a separate little state in the southeast corner of the Southern Shan States--1911: 19,008. They are, without question, least touched by civilization. Christianity has won [771] over only a few converts among them; the demon cult is still the predominant religion. The tall 361 masts, which are erected at sowing and harvesting [782] time as sacrificial posts for the spirits, indicate from afar the proximity of a Karenni village. A sturdy fence of bamboo wickerwork usually encloses the village itself, and most of the time /Figure 6--Interior of a Taungyo house in Myinka, near Kalaw./ the individual houses are also fenced in (Plate VII, 1). The grain sheds, which 343 are small pile structures, stand some distance away, usually outside the village fence because of fire hazard. This is a custom which can be observed among all Indochinese mountain tribes. This practice is all the more surprising since in the days when raids, robberies, and tribal feuds were very frequent just the most valuable possessions were kept outside the fort-like village enclosures. The grain sheds were secured only by a wooden bar and were accessible to everybody; it was even customary to keep also other valuable 343 possessions in these huts. However, the grain shed 778 seems to have been revered as holy; it is said that

K 342 [354] etc. are offered as a sacrifice to the spirits. The fireplace in the center of the single inside room is sunken and rests on a structure made of four posts which rise from under the K floor of the hut. Small bamboo pipes containing rice brandy are kept for the house spirits [782] [776] at the entrance to the hut, on the roof, and beK neath the fireplace. A pig's skull, a pig's [787] bladder, and a bundle of leaves, together with chicken bones which are used by all the mountain tribes for soothsaying, hang from the rafters. The piles under the house are joined together K with crossbeams; the place is used at night as a [231] stable for the buffaloes.

L 101 342 177 Of the tribes who live in the Southern Shan States, particularly in Kentung and the adjoining areas, the Lahu or Muhsö--1911: 18,103--and the kindred Kwi (26)--1911: 3,189--build

26. UBG I, 1 pp. 576 ff.

A 342 their houses either in the Shan style, or, sometimes in the style of the Wa or Yao; the Akha or Kaw (27) together with the AKo--1911: 37,300

27. Ibid., pp. 588 ff.

--have houses which are raised by low piles. Most of them have only one single overcrowded and neglected interior room.

W 101 Of more interest and importance are the Wa (28).

28. Ibid., pp. 493 ff.; about village and house layouts, pp. 498 ff., 503 ff. Also G. Drage, A Few Notes on Wa (Rangoon, 1907), pp. 34 ff.

A few of the tribes of the "tame" Wa live in Kengtung, Manglun and the adjacent Shan regions --1911: 14,674. Some of them, after embracing